

Testimony of the
Connecticut ENT Society
Connecticut Urology Society
Connecticut Society of Eye Physicians
Connecticut Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery Society
In SUPPORT of
S.B. No. 972 AN ACT PROTECTING MINORS FROM THE HEALTH RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH INDOOR
TANNING
To the Public Health Committee
On February 23, 2011

Good afternoon Representative Ritter, Senator Stillman, and other distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Dr. Philip Kerr, and I am a dermatologist and dermatopathologist practicing in Farmington at the UConn Health Center. I am the President of the CT Dermatology Society, and I am here representing more than 1200 Connecticut physicians who **strongly support** SB 972, An Act Protecting Minors from the Risks Associated with Indoor Tanning. As part of my testimony today we would also like to suggest additional language which would further protect our minors from exposure to indoor tanning.

There is little scientific doubt that a relationship exists between the artificial ultraviolet radiation that is emitted by commercial tanning parlors and the development of skin cancers. Recently, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a division of the World Health Organization, classified tanning devices as "Group 1: carcinogenic to humans." Other notable members of that group include asbestos and cigarette smoke. Their analysis showed a direct link between the use of tanning devices and a significantly increased risk of malignant melanoma. Malignant melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer and the sixth most common cause of cancer deaths in the United States.

At the present time, children age 16 or under need only present a permission slip from a parent, the validity of which is unknown, to use tanning facilities, and the sale of the devices is not regulated by the State. Nor does the State require posting of warning signs at tanning parlors similar to warnings found on cigarette and alcohol labels. Furthermore, there is no additional service tax placed on these services by the State to offset any healthcare costs the State may incur caring for individuals with skin cancers induced by indoor tanning. While we agree with SB 972's tenet that consent forms must be signed, in person, by a minor's parent or guardian in order to use a tanning bed, we recommend taking it a step further by prohibiting children age 15 and under from using tanning devices. We therefore recommend amending the language in SB 972 as noted in the attached addendum.

In closing, we feel that the ever-growing body of evidence linking the use of indoor tanning facilities and the deadliest form of skin cancer requires us to take a firmer stance on how these services are used by minors in the State of Connecticut. In doing so, we hope and anticipate that lives will be saved. Thank you.

If members have any further questions, I can be reached at 860-679-4600, or you may contact Debbie Osborn, Executive Director of the Connecticut Dermatology Society, at 860-567-4911.

Addendum

Substitute Amending Language

Section 1. Section 19(b):

No minor under age 15 or under shall be permitted to use a tanning device while at a tanning facility. No minor age 16 or over shall be permitted to use a tanning device while at a tanning facility unless, prior to the minor's use of the tanning device, the operator (1) provides written materials concerning the health risks associated with the use of tanning devices, including the risks of developing melanoma, to both the minor and a parent or guardian accompanying the minor, and (2) obtains written consent for the minor's use of the tanning device from the parent or guardian accompanying the minor. Any operator who fails to comply with the provisions of this subsection shall be fined not more than one hundred dollars per occurrence. Such fine shall be payable to the municipal health department or health district for the municipality in which the tanning facility is located.